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DISCUSSION

A PROBLEM FOR THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

FRANK A. MANNY
Western State Normal School, Kalamazoo, Michigan

The ten quotations (omitting the eighth) given in the *School Review* for February, 1909 (p. 126),¹ were placed before sixty-one normal-school seniors with the result that after making all due allowance the students showed a better knowledge of the meaning of the allusions than was shown by the high-school pupils. It is reasonable to expect that with increasing maturity there would be more control over material of this kind, and that this would be especially true of a class selected to become teachers. Does it not seem that the frequent statements made as to the ignorance of the Bible manifested by students are overdrawn? Is this not a legitimate field for the Religious Education Association to enter in order to give us some definite basis drawn from the testing of representative public and private institutions of high-school, normal, and college grade by means of which we can judge better the present status of knowledge (or ignorance), and so determine means of advance?

An analysis of the results of such a study would show the chief lines of weakness and strength in our present instruction. In the test referred to the following are indications of difficulties: Joshua's reasons for the miracle were seldom even hinted at. The penalty for Adam's sin was variously given as expulsion, manual labor, and death. The last two were sometimes assigned to him and again to future generations as well. The "cup" was occasionally referred to Gethsemane. One student mentioned twelve commandments, and another evidently considered Exodus a place. The "tree of life" was confused with the other tree. Christ was named as the one who gave the commandments to Moses. Herod was occasionally confused with Pharaoh. The greatest number of errors occurred in the attempt to place Esau. One spoke of "Esau selling his birthright with a kiss." Others said "Esau and Isaac were Jacob's sons," "Jacob summoned Esau to him and Esau put on a goatskin," "Esau's hand deceived him in getting the blessing away from his brother," "Esau's hand was hairy and Jacob suspected that he was being deceived, and Esau told him it was Joseph's coat."

Inexactness and lack of having given thought to the material seem to be the chief defects.

¹ Cf. also the *School Review* for December, 1908, p. 680.